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## NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

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**SCHOOLS AND EPIDEMICS.**—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* in a report of the proceedings of the American Health Association, says that fifty cities were asked to give an opinion on the closing of schools as a means of controlling an epidemic. An analysis of the replies received from thirty-two cities showed that closing schools as a means of controlling epidemics, in six specific diseases, is unnecessary, unscientific and unjustifiable. The proper method of control involves a sufficient inspecting force of physicians and nurses to maintain close supervision of cases and contacts; enforcement of isolation and quarantine; the employment of clinical and laboratory tests and reliance on such data; close relation between the school medical inspection and the health department with the school forces; and continuous education of the public.

**AMBULANCE AIRSHIP.**—*The Annals of Surgery* describes an airship ambulance which has been used in the field. No alteration was made in the shape of the airship. The space occupied by the rear cockpit was adapted to contain a litter, with a maximum clearance of seventeen inches. The litter had a specially strong locking device. A translucent celluloid shield was clamped into place for additional protection against the air.

**SLEEP AND FLATULENCE.**—A writer in the *Medical News and Circular* asks, Why does rocking in the cradle, or dandling in the arms, so often soothe and put a child to sleep? It is because, owing to the constantly changing axis of the loops of intestines, the bubbles of wind are enabled to pass on. For the same reason, an adult when unable to sleep tosses on his bed from side to side. The flatulence moves on from the loops of intestine where it has been accumulating and sending disturbing messages to the higher centers. Many persons will sleep better after a dose of calomel than after one of the recognized hypnotics.

**ELECTRIC TREATMENT OF EXOPHTHALMIC GOITER.**—A French medical journal reports the treatment by electricity of two severe cases of goiter. Death from starvation, or heart failure, was only a question of weeks. One patient had twenty-seven half-hour sittings, the other forty-two, daily at first and later at intervals of a week. The women, aged 26 and 42, were apparently cured. One of them managed a large farm during her husband's absence at the front. Both patients were

recommended to take a pill containing a little ipecac, digitalis and opium, when they were under special strain.

**AUTOINTOXICATION.**—An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* controverts the usual view of the absorption of toxins from the bowel as being the cause of the unpleasant symptoms complained of by sufferers from constipation. They are rather due to pressure in the rectum, a plugging of the lower end of the canal which slows or stops the downward current and often produces ripples of reverse peristalsis. People who complain of autointoxication are often unduly sensitive and are too keenly aware of what is going on in their bodies. In point of fact, there is very little absorption through the mucous membrane of the lower bowel, and of the enormous number of bacteria found in the feces, nearly all are dead. Moreover, the great number of intestinal bacteria produce no soluble toxins. There is no reason to warn against enemas. It seems a shame to upset twenty-four feet of intestine with a purgative when the material to be removed is in the rectum, or sigmoid, within easy reach of a little water.

**NURSES AND INFLUENZA.**—During a recurrence of influenza in Pennsylvania affecting Altoona, Wilkes-Barre, and several other cities, the state health department had difficulty in providing a sufficient number of physicians and nurses, many families insisting on the services of a trained nurse. It was arranged to divide the towns into districts, allowing one trained nurse and a physician for a certain number of patients.

**THE CHIN AND SPEECH.**—An Amsterdam medical journal is quoted as saying that Van den Brock, professor of anatomy at the University of Utrecht, discussing the evolution of the chin as a consequence of spoken language, said that only when articulate speech became possible were human being able to manifest their feelings and thoughts to each other, then began the rapid upward rise. The muscular movements which the use of speech entailed, modified the shape of the chin to what we see now.

**EFFECT OF GROUND GLASS ON DOGS.**—In an attempt to determine what lesions, if any, are produced by glass in the gastro-intestinal tract, feeding experiments were carried out on dogs by two military surgeons and were reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Examination after death showed that the ingestion of ground glass or powdered glass has no toxic effect and produces no lesion, either gross or microscopic, on the gastro-intestinal tract of dogs. The intestines were not distended and there was no ulceration, hemorrhage or exudate present.